A STUDY OF AUTOBIOGRAPHIES OF BAMA FAUSTINA, MALALA YOUSAFZAI AND MAYA ANGELOU AS ENLIGHTENING TOOLS TOWARDS SOCIAL REFORMATION

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A) Introduction:

Social reformers across the world have marked their influence by their writings and speeches, by their active participation in the movements and by their way of sensitizing the oppressed society of gender, caste, religion and other social evils rampant in the society. Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, Savitribai Phule, Shahu Maharaj, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Mahatma Gandhi. All these social reformers have tried to create a sense of equality and unity by bringing people together from all different sections of society. They tried to throw out exploitation, discrimination and the ill treatment given by the society to a section of society. They believed that the continuous efforts of strong communication could change and open the eyes of the oppressed and oppressor and they anticipated a creation of new and casteless society as Rabindranath Tagore says, *"Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.'*

Writing has been a strong and influential medium in all ages and various genres in literature have their great role in educating the people and situating their imagination in the contextuality of text and textuality of context. Autobiography as genre has enlightened the readers, manifesting the writers' intent of living and the challenges and hardships they went through while living in the society. Such world-famous autobiographies delineated the plight on the one hand and the plan to reform on the other which include eradication of caste system, girls' education, widows' rights and the fundamental rights of common people or oppressed – social oppression, political oppression and economic oppression.

Modern critical theories and literary criticism like Post-structuralism, Deconstruction, Post-colonialism propounded the process of how meaning is generated and how meaning is a social construct based on binary opposition. The structure of binaries, for instance, man-woman, white-black, upper caste-lower caste, rich-poor and the like have been the cause of

inequality and hierarchy resulting in a society of discrimination and exploitation. In such binaries, the first object is considered to be dominant and is present in the creation of meaning. The very fabric of meaning comes from the first object of binary which is centred.

This very process of centring needs to decentred to reform the society into a harmonious whole of equality, fraternity and liberty, which will, no doubt, result in justice for all. Hence, this has proved that meaning is socially constructed and is indeterminate. Meaning is a significant mode of perception which conveys the message that change is possible if we establish binary as a different but not inequal and hierarchical.

The autobiography of Bama Faustina, Malala Yousafzai and Maya Angelou have a strong propagation of human values to build a society of progress and a society 'live and let live'. These writers have expressed their strong-felt desires and emotions against the odds they faced and how they rose against all these. They want the people to be the agents of change, decentring the way we think. They try to focus on the positive side of the life. Their writings inspire the oppressed, exploited and downtrodden section of society and such an enlightening ignites and trains the minds for how the path of non-violence, patience and continuous struggle for rights using the way of communication like writing, consulting, following legal system and constitutional path. No doubt, it is not an easy and it has no short-cut, nevertheless, if our efforts are honest and constitutional, we shall succeed to change the long held and illogical pattern of social system, establishing a society – where all live and love.

Karukku written by Bama Faustina depicted the issues of the caste operations within the catholic Church and compels Bama to accept the same, but Bama on the contrary returns to village rejecting all such subjugations due to lack of dignity. She describes how Dalit people

have their limitations in their progress and thinking and how they face the disgrace which is prominently dominated by the upper-class society.

I Am Malala written by Malala documents the terrorism and their objectives on the one hand and on the other a fight for girls' education, their rights and their status in the society. Her father who champions her to continue the struggle for women empowerment becomes an inspirer for her cause.

Maya Angelo's *I know why the Caged Bird Sing* delineates how racial discrimination in America caused to the sufferings of black people, their subjugation and lack of freedom. Telling metaphor of caged bird clearly brings out how these black people are deprived of their joy, rights and freedom of mind.

B) RESEARCH PROBLEM

Three autobiographies have strong relevance of social enigma which intricate the life of marginalised society and expose the social fabric of human relation in which certain section of the society are deliberately ignored, resulting in their anguish, anger and lack of opportunities. The proposed research is an entirely new and innovative in the field of literary research and will explore new dimension of female version of marginalised living. Their suppression and exploitation will be an instrument of their voices which will systematically highlight the spirit of reformation and evaluative process of gender disparity broken in layers of social system of castes. The study of these autobiographies will encapsulate a strategic deliberation and investigation into psychological situation and the sufferings which cause to develop their consciousness towards life and challenges. And, finally this research will establish a new paradigm of social equation for equality.

C) OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

The objectives of the research are as below:

1. To study and explore the views, ideas, and thoughts of the writers through their autobiographies.
2. To study and interpret their propagation with their sense and sensibility towards a social reformation.
3. To co-relate their experiences and struggles the way they fought against the social discrimination due to their cast and marginality.
4. To study and analyse how the oppressed and exploited can rise and fight for their rights despite all odds.
5. To delineate a message based on rational mode of thinking to establish human values and social harmony.

D) HYPOTHESIS:

The proposed research outlines how the autobiography of Bama Faustina, Malala Yousafzai and Maya Angelou enlighten the readers to change their perception and how the meaning is a social construct on the one hand and how the suffered and oppressed section of the society can fight against all these difficulties for their fundamental rights on the other. Finally, the research would centre on the social equilibrium in human affairs of education, politics, and economic. Bama Faustina, Malala Yousafzai and Maya Angelou represent India, Pakistan and America respectively and this common thread of exploitation and need of reformation will be underlined and explored.

E) DATA, SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS:

Proposed research shall be entirely descriptive in nature, using primary and secondary sources. It aims to study the autobiographies of Bama Faustina, Malala Yousafzai and Maya Angelou with critical exploration as texts, justifying the hypothesis. Scope of the research will be engrossed in socio-cultural aspects which will aim at stating a harmony into diversified cultures through their ideas and experiences. The work will be completed in the library and the secondary sources will be collected from the reference books available in the library, at online resources, in journals, and in literary magazines. The guidelines and formats directed by university and the standard set by the latest edition of MLA for writing thesis in literature shall be strictly followed.

The present research is limited to the three select autobiographies written by Bama Faustina, Malala Yusufzai and Maya Angelou.

F) RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Present research shall be entirely descriptive in nature, using primary and secondary sources. It aims to study autobiography of Bama Faustina, Malala Yusufzai and Maya Angelou. The work will be completed in the library and secondary sources will be collected from the reference books available in library, at online sources, in journals and in the literary magazines.

G) JUSTIFICATION OF RESEARCH:

Literature has been instrumental in changing and educating the society across the world from the time immemorial, though the forms of literature have continuously been changing in the course of time. From historical monuments, carvings, paintings, holy books, and subsequent development and introduction of literary genres to literature of protest and to recently the digital and medical humanities, all have generated a literary taste of ‘delighting and

instructing' either art for art's sake or art for morality or reformation. Keeping this tempo of knowledge, the autobiographies of selected women writers from three different countries will define and postulate a grammar of change for the women, downtrodden and oppressed and accordingly this proposed research will be a social document for further research and in the field of academics, with an inspiration and ignition for the social harmony.

H) PEDOGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

This proposed research will inculcate a value system in the society and will contribute to have a community progress. Socio-cultural aspects are very much rampant in the society and people are strictly bound with their closed minds. But such type of research will help them open their eyes with a sense for human dignity and progress of humanity. This research, no doubt, will be an instrumental to develop human understanding stating that how we are born equal and how we have right to progress the way we want following constitutional laws. This research will motivate the research community and the concerned society to change the mind-set towards inequality, discrimination of caste and unfair treatment.

I) TENTATIVE CHAPTER SCHEME

1. CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss the significance of autobiography as a genre, with the introductory background of world-famous autobiographies in literature, imparting how this genre helps to explore societal engagement, existential issues and the progress of self, followed by the background and significance of the autobiography of Bama Faustina's *Karukku*, Malala Yousafzai's *I am Malala* and Maya Angelou's *I know why the caged bird sing*

2. CHAPTER II: SOCIAL REFORMATION THROUGH *KARUKKU*: BAMA FAUSTINA

Karukku written by Bama Faustina depicted the issues of the caste operations within the catholic Church and compels Bama to accepts the same, but Bama on the contrary returns to village rejecting all such subjugations due to lack of dignity. She describes how Dalit people have their limitations in their progress and thinking and how they face the disgrace which is prominently dominated by the upper-class society. This chapter will explore the narratives of inequality and odds faced by the writer interpreting how social system deprives the fundamental rights and progress of marginalised people in general.

3. CHAPTER III: SOCIAL REFORMATION THROUGH *I AM MALALA*: MALALA

I Am Malala written by Malala documents the terrorism and their objectives on the one hand and on the other a fight for girls' education, their rights and their status in the society. Her father who champions her to continue the struggle for women empowerment becomes an inspirer for her cause. This chapter will delineate the struggle of identity and existential stand through her self-reformation and sense of actualization with education as an instrument to rationalizing the minds of people.

4. CHAPTER IV: SOCIAL REFORMATION THROUGH *I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD SING*: MAYA ANGELOU

Maya Angelou's *I know why the Caged Bird Sing* delineates how racial discrimination in America caused to the sufferings of black people, their subjugation and lack of freedom. Telling metaphor of caged bird clearly brings out how these black people are deprived of

their joy, rights and freedom of mind. This chapter will formulate a social memorandum to eradicate racial biases sensitizing the black people for their rights and opportunities.

5. CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

This chapter will conclude with comparative and analytical study of the preceding chapters, structuring a synthesis for social harmony. The research concludes with the study of autobiographies of Bama Faustina, Malala Yousafzai and Maya Angelou. It will focus on the social reformation of the society through the autobiographies.

This concluding chapter will concentrate on realities of the society and the characters like Bama Faustina, Malala Yousafzai and Maya Angelou faces many problems and stand against the orthodox society through their autobiographies.

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